



## **United States Mission to the OSCE**

### **Statement on the Presidential Elections in Tajikistan**

As delivered by Chargé d'Affaires Kyle Scott  
to the Permanent Council, Vienna  
November 14, 2006

Thank you, Mr. Chairman,

We concur with the preliminary conclusions of the OSCE election observation mission regarding the November 6 presidential election in Tajikistan. Although there may have been improvements from previous elections, the report concludes that this election lacked genuine choice and meaningful pluralism and, therefore, did not meet the democratic electoral practices as outlined in the 1990 OSCE Copenhagen Document.

The people of Tajikistan had little real choice in this election due to the absence of a serious campaign or genuine competition. It seems almost ironical therefore that despite the near certain outcome of the elections, observers witnessed instances of family, proxy, and multiple voting, and in some cases, ballot stuffing. Some district election commissions would not allow international observers to watch the vote tabulation process.

On a positive note, however, the election was held peacefully and was administered relatively efficiently, ballots were printed in four languages representing an inclusive approach to minority participation, voter turnout was high, and candidates and their proxies were for the first time provided with free media airtime and print space. We welcome these improvements.

In that spirit, we urge the Government of Tajikistan to continue to work to meet OSCE standards and commitments. In particular, we encourage strongly Tajikistan's government to work with the OSCE and ODIHR on implementing forthcoming recommendations for further improving elections. We also urge the government to work with civil society and the international community to strengthen democratic institutions in Tajikistan, and to undertake real steps to develop true party pluralism before the next parliamentary elections in 2010.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman.